

than me—it is not right to hold up everything we are trying to do on Ukraine.

This is a global emergency. The fate of not only Ukraine but of democracy and its ability to achieve victory is under threat. And here we have objections to critical positions that can help us make sure that we win in that battle.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE  
CALENDAR

Madam President, let me try one other thing. I want to make in order the same request that I previously made with respect to Calendar No. 788, Erin Elizabeth McKee, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MARSHALL. Madam President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, so here we go. The person who would be responsible for helping the humanitarian challenge in Ukraine and in the surrounding countries where 3 million people have fled to, we can't get her in position—can't get her into a position to do the job to help millions of Ukrainians who are fleeing.

I don't understand how the party of Reagan, the party of freedom and democracy, the party of standing up to these people can actually create a set of circumstances where this is like helping Putin at the end of the day. It is like helping Putin at the end of the day.

Now, while Senator MARSHALL didn't speak to it, I understand his concerns are about COVID origins. Well, there is nothing wrong with that. It has been a lively topic of discussion in many forums, including the Senate. But these things have nothing to do with what Ambassador McKee is nominated for: Assistant Administrator for Europe and Eurasia.

All of us, including Senator MARSHALL, know that we need to do everything possible to support Ukrainians in their time of need. Blocking Ambassador McKee is self-defeating.

It is also not clear to me what more USAID can do to satisfy Senator MARSHALL. I have inquired because I heard this was the issue. USAID has been engaged at the most senior levels in trying to be helpful and responsive to Senator MARSHALL. They offered him and his team briefings, and I understand that none of those offers have been accepted. They have also pointed Senator MARSHALL's office to a wealth of information on specific USAID projects of interest.

So I would urge the Senator, instead of blocking nominees, to act on USAID's multiple briefing offers and engage them meaningfully. That would be more helpful to his ultimate goal—but not to be helping Putin, at the end of the day, by not being able to take

care of the humanitarian needs of the Ukrainians.

I have seen a lot over my course of 40 years in public service and 30 years in the Congress. I just—this is mind-boggling. But more than that, it really undermines our national security. It really undermines our help with the Ukrainian people. And so I hope that some saner minds will prevail in the days ahead when I come back to the floor to try this once again.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

UKRAINE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I am joined on the floor today by my friend and colleague Senator GRAHAM. We have the honor of coleading the U.S. congressional delegation to the Munich Security Conference, which for a great number of reasons, all well-deserved, is still called CODEL McCain. It is the only code that is named for a Senator who is no longer with us, and it is out of respect for Senator McCain's long tradition of support for that conference, NATO, and the Atlantic alliance, more generally.

This year, obviously things were very different. The Russians were on the border of Ukraine, and two things came out of this conference that I thought were important. One was an early flicker of hope within the delegation that the Ukrainians might actually pull this off. That was supported by none of our briefings. The entire national security establishment had presumed that it was only a matter of time until Ukraine fell. But Senator GRAHAM and I and others were questioning each other during that trip: Is there really no chance?

And the other thing was going after the kleptocrats and the oligarchs around Putin and making their lives miserable. And there was just a wonderful explosion of bipartisan support for that that has now manifested in funds, in laws, in pending bills, in lots of bipartisanship—and Senator GRAHAM and I are going to have a bit of a colloquy about that with the Chair's permission.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I will say one thing, and then I will hand it over to Senator GRAHAM.

On March 8, I sent out over social media this sentiment:

Keep alive in your heart the possibility that Ukraine could actually win: columns stalled, defense fierce, casualties high, morale low, deserters surrendering, food and fuel snafu, population uncowed.

Since then, we are hearing more and more. I will read four quotes, and the first is from the man we heard from this morning, the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who, in his speech to the people of Ukraine on March 14, didn't just talk about peace for Ukraine—although, he did talk about peace for Ukraine, but he also talked about “our victory.” Victory. It is an important word to keep in mind.

He is not alone.

GEN Wesley Clark, also on March 14, said:

The battle for Ukraine is hanging in the balance. . . . If we can get enough in there, they'll push the Russians out.

Victory.

It would be a tremendous win for the West.

Anne Applebaum knows probably about as much about this area as anyone. She joined us on the Munich security delegation, and she also spoke afterward on the 15th of March about it. She said:

[V]ictory in this conflict—

Victory—

[V]ictory . . . would provide an enormous, transformational boost in confidence to the entire democratic world.

Michael Kofman, the director of Russian studies at the Center for Naval Analyses has said the same thing: “Are [the Ukrainians] in a position to win the war? Yes,” he said.

I will close with Francis Fukuyama. On the 10th of March, the author of “The Origins of Political Order” said the following things. I am quoting from a longer piece selectively.

1. Russia is heading for outright defeat in Ukraine.

2. The collapse of their position could be sudden and catastrophic, rather than happening slowly through a war of attrition. The army in the field will reach a point where it can neither be supplied nor withdrawn, and morale will vaporize.

5. The Biden administration's decisions not to declare a no-fly zone or help transfer Polish MiGs were both good ones; they've kept their heads during a very emotional time. It is much better to have the Ukrainians defeat the Russians on their own, depriving Moscow of the excuse that NATO attacked them.

Finally, he said:

A Russian defeat will make possible a “new birth of freedom,” and get us out of our funk about the declining state of global democracy. The spirit of 1989 will live on, thanks to . . . brave Ukrainians.

We are here together on the floor in bipartisan fashion to urge that in the press coverage and in our national security conversations about this, we keep open in our hearts and in our planning the possibility of victory for Ukraine.

Senator GRAHAM.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Well, thank you. All I can say is, SHELDON, thank you.

John is no longer with us, but I think he is here in spirit at this moment. If Senator McCain were here, there would be 27 MiGs they would want to transfer because he would probably be in one, headed for Ukraine.

The bottom line is, 20 days into this fight, we are all amazed at how bad the Russians are doing and how well the Ukrainians are doing. And I think what Senator WHITEHOUSE is trying to remind us all of is that the outcome of Ukraine really does matter to the world at large.

Senator McCain was known for his support of the transatlantic alliance, a